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ABSTRACT

This manual outlines a program model that combines employment training with literacy building for low-income single mothers. Chapter I introduces these programs. Chapter II discusses barriers that a low-income single mother faces. Chapter III offers directions for thinking about the feasibility of moving into literacy services by conducting a program and community assessment. Chapter IV describes three elements that set the framework for the literacy training and that must be compatible with the employment-related aspect of the program--adopting a set of standards, identifying a client population, and establishing a budget. Chapter V discusses the standards, implementation strategies, and issues related to recruitment, intake, and assessment. Topics covered in Chapter VI on service delivery include program design, staffing, instructional strategies, support services, evaluation of progress, and rewards for program participation. Chapter VII deals with impact as a way of documenting the success of the individual woman and of the program as a whole. Worksheets, checklists, sample materials, and other relevant resources are included within Chapters III-VII. Chapter VIII lists adovcacy issues and recommends policy initiatives and directions to increase women's and girls' access to literacy programs. Chapters IX and X contain a conclusion and annotated bibliography. (YLB)

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# WIDER OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

## A Program Model

Written by Judy A. Beck

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Wider Opportunities for Women, Inc.
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## About Wider Opportunities for Women, Inc.

Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) works nationally and in its home community of Washington, D.C. to achieve economic independence and equality of opportunity for women and girls. For nearly 25 years, WOW has been at the forefront of women's employment issues.

What began as a local Washington effort to help women help themselves has become a multi-faceted women's employment organization, recognized nationally for its model training and job placement programs for women. While it continues to provide training to individual women in Washington, D.C., WOW also leads a national network of nearly 400 independent women's employment programs and advocates in 48 states. Each year, WOW's network serves more than a quarter of a million women seeking employment information, counseling, training and jobs. With its unique perspective as a job trainer and policy monitor, WOW is a respected advocate for the needs and rights of women workers.

## About the Single Female Parent Literacy Project

With support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, WOW conducted an 18-month, national project to improve the literacy skills of women who head families. The project included:

* research on women's employment and training programs with literacy components that serve low-income women and publication of five in-depth case studies
* creation of a National Task Force on Female Literacy through the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education to monitor and analyze public and private initiatives to improve literacy
* development and dissemination of a literacy skills program model within an employment and training setting
* design of a public education effort to build greater awareness of the steps necessary to increase the literacy of single mothers and their children.

The five case study sites were chosen through a national survey of WOW's Women's Work Force Network members and extensive outreach to the employment training and women's advocacy community. The eventual selection was based on an initial assessment of longevity of service delivery, funding stability, staffing capability and success rate of the literacy component of the program.

An *Executive Summary* of the case studies and the complete individual case study reports are available from Wider Opportunities for Women (an order form is included at the back of this manual). The sites are:

**New York, NY**
Non-traditional Employment for Women
Access for Women: Expanding Options for Teen Mothers
The Center for Public Advocacy Research (research only)

**Chicago, IL**
The Midwest Women's Center: Women's Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Training

**Dallas, TX**
The STEP Foundation: Mary Crowley Academy

**Washington, DC**
Wider Opportunities for Women

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# I. INTRODUCTION:

# Why Combine Literacy and Employment Training?

Research has established that the greatest predictor of a child's future academic success is the literacy of the child's mother. In households headed by educationally and economically disadvantaged mothers, the educational progress of the children—as well as the family's economic well-being—are at great risk.

It is estimated that 23 percent of all adult females have severely limited literacy skills (as compared to 17 percent of all males). Currently, more than one-third of families maintained by women live below the poverty level. Three of five adults receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) have not completed high school and the average reading level of AFDC mothers between the ages of 17 and 21 is below sixth grade. Over a third of all displaced homemakers have an eighth-grade or less education and 39 percent of these women fall below the poverty line. The linkages between illiteracy, un- or under-employment, long-term welfare dependency and poverty are dramatic, and the results of those linkages are tragic for women and their children.

In looking to the year 2000, experts have estimated that two out of every three new entrants to the labor force will be female. Only 27 percent of all new jobs are expected to fall into low-skill categories. The United States' economy is undergoing a transformation from production-oriented to service- or product-oriented. This will mean not only a change in the kinds of jobs available but also a change in the way that workers work and the basic skills needed to do those jobs.

*Literacy*, therefore, must be seen as not only good basic skills—reading, writing, mathematics—but also as the ability to perform critical, higher order thinking. As jobs have become more complex, the demand for thinking skills has and will continue to increase. Critical thinking applied in the workplace will entail being able to analyze and solve problems, make choices, communicate decisions, relate information to situations and understand one's role within a larger organizational structure.

Dr. Sue Berryman of Columbia University has written that "improving basic skills is not a sufficient objective for the educational reform movement or for how we often conceive of literacy programs." She writes that critical thinking skills previously were reserved for the "educational elites" of society; now these skills must be incorporated into everyone's education. Additionally, familiarity and experience with computers must be included as among the necessary "literacies" for today's and tomorrow's work force.

For the first time in our history, the majority of new jobs will require some kind of post-secondary education. Given that one of every five current American workers reads at no more than eighth-grade level (one of eight reads at fourth-grade level or below), and that so many women now unemployed also have reading levels below the eighth grade, it is clear that literacy improvement and employability training must go hand-in-hand if women are to take their place in the labor force and to succeed at being economically self-sufficient.

## *Development of the Program Model*

In 1987–88, Wider Opportunities for Women conducted a four-city action research effort which focused on the needs of low-income single mothers for both literacy and job training. Most importantly, the WOW study identified replicable strategies being used by five programs to meet the requirements of low-income single mothers within an employment training environment. The complete descriptions of those five programs are contained in the individual case study reports which document the specific experiences of the programs. An

executive summary of all five sites is also avaliable. (See publications list at back of manual.)

The program model outlined in this manual, combining employment training with literacy building, was developed during a roundtable forum held at Wider Opportunities for Women in April, 1988. Attending were representatives from the five women's employment and training programs, as well as other experts in the field. The key components of this model and the strategies suggested to implement them were all agreed upon by the roundtable participants.

By **model** we do not mean to suggest that every component must be replicated in exactly the same way. Alternative ways to achieve a recommended standard for operation are presented. Each program must make the best determination of what is the appropriate method of implementation. Every case study site did not incorporate fully every component of this model. However, it is the experience of the research sites that these are the key components, and addressing them in some way increases the potential for a program to achieve success—and therefore for the women to achieve success.

## Key Program Components

Literacy programs that consciously target services for single mothers are uncommon. Programs for single mothers that combine literacy services with employment training programs are even more scarce. A typical experience is that a woman with low reading and math scores who applies to an employment program will be screened out and referred to adult basic education classes offered by other agencies. Even if the woman is invited to return when her scores improve, in most cases, the program will never hear from her again.

On-site linkage of a literacy class to an employment and training program can be a significant factor in inspiring a woman to view improving her basic education skills as the foundation for improving her economic future. The findings of the WOW research project suggest a service delivery model for low-income single mothers which combines several key elements:

* integration of literacy skills into employment training
* aggressive, sensitive outreach and recruitment
* provision for comprehensive support services
* small group training experiences in combination with individualized remediation
* inclusion of computer literacy and critical thinking skills
* career and other counseling
* work experience internships in employer settings
* job search and follow-up.

The project research findings stress repeatedly that the comprehensive needs of the mother and her family must be addressed within the total program in order to have success in both literacy gains and employment readiness. As long as the literacy work is integrated with and incorporated in the employment-focused program, it does not matter if the parent agency is community- or campus-based, a free-standing skills training program or part of a multi-purpose center.

This program model is applicable to an employment training program, whether it is focused on pre-employment readiness and/or traditional or nontraditional occupational skills training. However, this program model has not been tested within the context of building literacy when English is the second language.

## How to Use this Manual

The ordering of the chapters in this manual is suggestive of the steps a program participant might follow—being recruited, going through intake and assessment, entering the service delivery components and participating in a final evaluation. This is not the order in which you want to plan your program, i.e., you will want to have your actual classroom service delivery planned before you begin recruitment efforts. Therefore, you will need to work back and forth in the manual, using the results of a worksheet or checklist from one chapter to help plan activities from another.

* Read through the manual completely to get a feel for the general scope of the program being suggested.

* Concentrate on the "Understanding the Barriers" and "Preliminary Steps" chapters as a process for helping to make the decision whether or not it is appropriate and feasible for your program to add a new, or enrich an existing, literacy component.
* Keep in mind that even if you decide you cannot fully implement the program model, you may find ways to strengthen some of the educational or supportive services elements of your current program.
* The format of chapters outlining program components is designed to present recommended standards, methods of implementation, and issues or potential problem-solving techniques. Worksheets, checklists, sample materials and other relevant resources are included within each chapter.

# II. UNDERSTANDING THE BARRIERS

A low-income single mother who wants to improve her basic skills faces a complex web of barriers that inhibits her efforts to participate in literacy programs. The barrier cited most frequently is the difficulty of finding accessible, affordable child care; but finances, housing, health, transportation, family problems and social pressures can all become major obstacles.

In addition, women struggle with psychological barriers such as low self-esteem and fear of failure. Impatience with the slow pace of daily progress is another stumbling block. Many women feel strong pressure for an immediate source of income. Living on the edge financially, they are reluctant to make long-range plans.

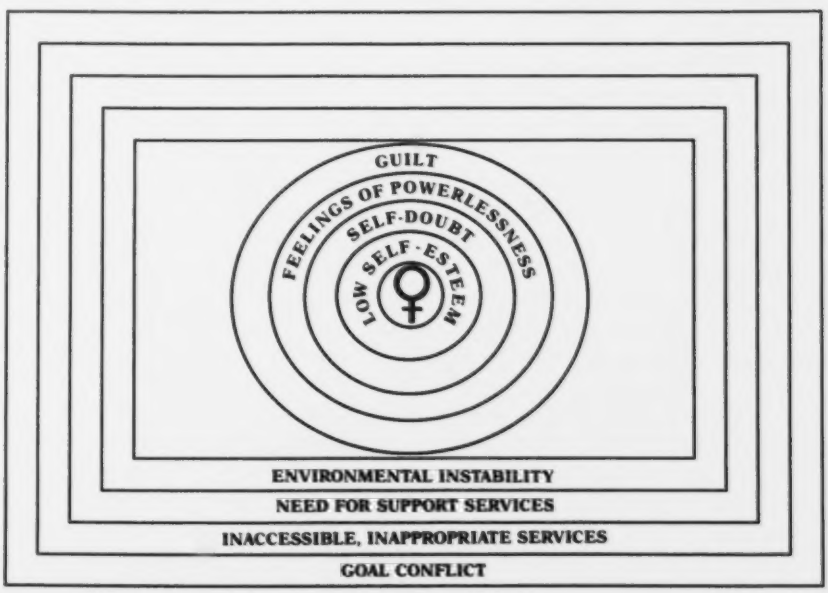
Literacy providers themselves often inadvertently place barriers in the path of potential participants by scheduling classes at night, for example, when child care is more difficult to arrange, or by meeting in public school buildings, which low-income women may associate with past failures. Teaching students with a wide range of skill levels together in one class can also create barriers to progress, as the slower students may feel embarrassed, while the others become bored or frustrated.

Many of these barriers are the same ones faced by low-income women regarding entrance to and success in employment training programs generally. Women's employability programs, which already understand the needs of women, are in an excellent position to incorporate literacy as a program component.

It is important to understand the impact of these barriers on the choices women make when designing such a component. Only in addressing these barriers and finding ways to overcome, or at least ameliorate them, will programs be effective.

It is useful to divide the barriers into those that are *internal* to the woman and those that are *external*. Internal barriers are those that the woman carries within herself—an extension of what she believes she can and cannot do based on her own self-perception and past experiences. External barriers are those which confront the woman because of her environment or life circumstances.

Employment training programs need to be cognizant of the interplay between these barriers. Whether internal or external, they work in concert to keep a woman within a personal shell and in an environmental box—isolated from services.



The programmatic implication of understanding these barriers is the need for providing *comprehensive services*. A program that focuses, for example, on attacking the barrier of low-self esteem (internal), while helpful, without also assisting with child care provision or some other external barriers, may not, in the long run, be truly successful in moving women towards self-sufficiency through literacy and employment training. A combination of both internal and external barriers must be addressed to open access for women to the program services they need.

## Internal Barriers

**Low self-esteem**: the emotional legacy from a personal history of "failure" can prevent a woman from contacting a literacy program or impede her progress if she does enroll. There may be a failure to recognize the breadth of her own knowledge and potential strengths, a lack of support from her family, or she may come from a background in which education is not considered important and is actively discouraged as a waste of time or an unnecessary luxury.

**Self-doubt**: many women will have questions about their own ability to learn. Women will express fears about being "too stupid," "not good enough," or about "not trying hard enough." When a woman has functional learning problems (i.e., dyslexia) *and* is illiterate, her self-doubt is reinforced and she is less likely to seek help through a program.

**Feelings of powerlessness**: a woman may manifest her feelings of powerlessness over her own life by denying that barriers even exist, blaming herself for perceived failures. Because she may feel overwhelmed by all that faces her, a woman may become immobile, not able to manage time or make life decisions and unable to believe that she can be responsible for her own life. Her feelings of powerlessness may impede her ability to cope with the institutional systems having an impact on her life.

**Guilt**: research has shown that most single mothers define themselves as mothers first. Time spent away from their children for self-improvement induces feelings of guilt. Some women feel that their plans should wait until their children are raised or at least in school. This barrier underscores the lack of self-definition many women have and their tendency to see their own worth only in relation to others, such as their children.

## External Barriers

**Environmental instability**: problems with housing or homelessness, family disruption, domestic violence and health concerns (physical, mental, emotional), as well as a precarious financial position, may prohibit many low-income single mothers from even considering their literacy needs or the services available to them. A community environment that includes drug problems, crime and other threats to safety contributes to a woman's sense of instability around her family, underscoring her guilt if she leaves the family to meet her own needs.

**Need for support services**: some types of services are necessary to facilitate program participation, such as child care, transportation, stipends or emergency funds while other types of services are linked to classroom performance, such as the need for personal counseling and peer support. Women with the greatest needs—the most children or the lowest income—are often unable to enroll in literacy programs because of inadequate support services.

**Inaccessible, inappropriate services**: many literacy programs are not targeted to low-income single mothers and are structured in ways that inhibit their participation. Programs are not located near homes, jobs, day care or on transportation lines; they are in schools, which carry negative memories; they have limited slots open and excessive red-tape enrollment requirements; or they are not scheduled during the day when children are in school. In addition, program services may be geared only toward job placement, may rely on inflexible and often inaccurate testing methods to measure progress and may simply cost too much.

**Goal conflict**: literacy providers must often meet the criteria of funders for certain outcomes at the same time they are trying to meet the needs of single mothers, despite the fact that these two sets of demands are often diverse and possibly even incompat-

ible. Literacy programs which fail to help single mothers develop and carry out realistic and meaningful goals are actually adding to the barriers these women face. A woman seeking literacy services in order to obtain employment needs to be encouraged to be selective about the type of employment she wants. A minimum wage job with no benefits may not surpass the combination of cash and noncash public assistance she could receive. Women who enter literacy programs with extremely low basic skills may need to set a more long-term plan for developing those skills. Further investment in training or a planned period of education and part-time work may be needed to secure self-supporting employment. On the other hand, realistic short-term goals are also important for a program to develop with a woman so that achievement becomes a reality and more immediate needs can be met. Most single mothers will therefore require a continuum of educational and employment training services.

## Conclusion

Low-income single mothers often face problems so overwhelming that they usually cannot focus on literacy as an isolated goal. However, there are strategies for working with women to overcome those barriers. Literacy programs per se will probably not succeed in isolation but must be part of an overall strategy linking participants to other services, including employment and training. As one component in a comprehensive effort, however, literacy becomes a vitally important leg of the journey to economic self-sufficiency.

If your organization has an established procedure it follows when deciding to add a new program component, use it when making the decision to integrate literacy services with your current employment training. Two major areas should be carefully analyzed before beginning to design a literacy component: your current programs and your community environment.

Because this program model calls for the integration of literacy with employment training, it is necessary to define clearly whom you serve, how you serve your population and what your available resources are. Additionally, an assessment of your community and the literacy services now being offered (or not) should be undertaken to avoid possible duplication and to begin building vital linkages at this early stage.

The following two sections offer directions for thinking about the feasibility of moving into literacy services and some tools to help you make that decision.

## Program Self-Assessment

Several of the research case study sites developed their awareness of the need for literacy services over time. This awareness evolved through the programs' analyses of the factors having an impact on the women they served and through documention of the women's progress through the programs.

The program model outlined in this manual is focused on providing comprehensive literacy skills in conjunction with employment-related training for low-income women who have children. (You can also use this model with low-income women who are not mothers.) Before doing anything else, review the mission statement of your organization. Your statement should set a framework within which this program model for literacy training could be included.

There are five major areas you will want to think about as a way of determining whether or not this is an appropriate and feasible direction for your program at this time:

1. program participants
2. current program services
3. program additions
4. preliminary staffing considerations
5. funding.

By carefully completing the following inventories you will get an idea of how comprehensive your program already is, how responsive it can be to the special needs of low-income women and to what extent your current participants are in need of literacy services along with employment training.

When you fill out the inventories, if there is information missing, particularly concerning the basic educational skill levels of participants, you may need to accumulate anecdotal evidence from staff and the participants themselves. You can do this through conversations, interviews and surveys. Other missing information could be a signal that your program needs to consider what service gaps may exist for current participants.

### Area 1: Program Participants

The first step is to describe your current participant population and to identify what their literacy needs are. At this time you will want to think about women whom you do not now serve—whom you may have turned away from services—whom you would like to include in your program. Following is an inventory to help you summarize your program participants.

#### Description of Program Participants

Answer each item; leave blank items where you don't have information; if you feel it is not applicable to your program, mark NA.

Number of women served annually_____

Racial/ethnic diversity of women_____

_____

Does the above breakdown reflect the general population of women in your community_____

Average age_____

Average income_____

Average number of children_____

What percentage of program participants drop out for nonpositive reasons_____

Average grade level of reading ability_____

Average grade level of math ability_____

What percentage of program applicants are not accepted because of low basic educational skill levels_____

### Area 2: Current Program Services

Next, complete an inventory of what program services and components you are already offering.

#### Inventory of Current Program Components

For each category, list what specific activities and/or services your program is providing.

Recruitment_____

_____

Intake_____

_____

Skill Assessment_____

_____

Formal Testing_____

_____

Career Exploration

Job Readiness

Occupational Skill Training

Basic Educational Skills (reading, writing, math)

Personal Counseling

Child Care and Other Support Services

Job Search

Job Development

Internships

On-the-Job Training

Evaluation

Follow-up

Other

It is important to see how your current program services address the barriers faced by low-income single mothers in accessing program services. Using the inventory below, you can identify both the strengths and gaps of your current program in meeting barriers through specific activities.

**Barriers Inventory**

From the Inventory of Current Program Components, key which specific activities or services address which barriers faced by low-income single mothers.

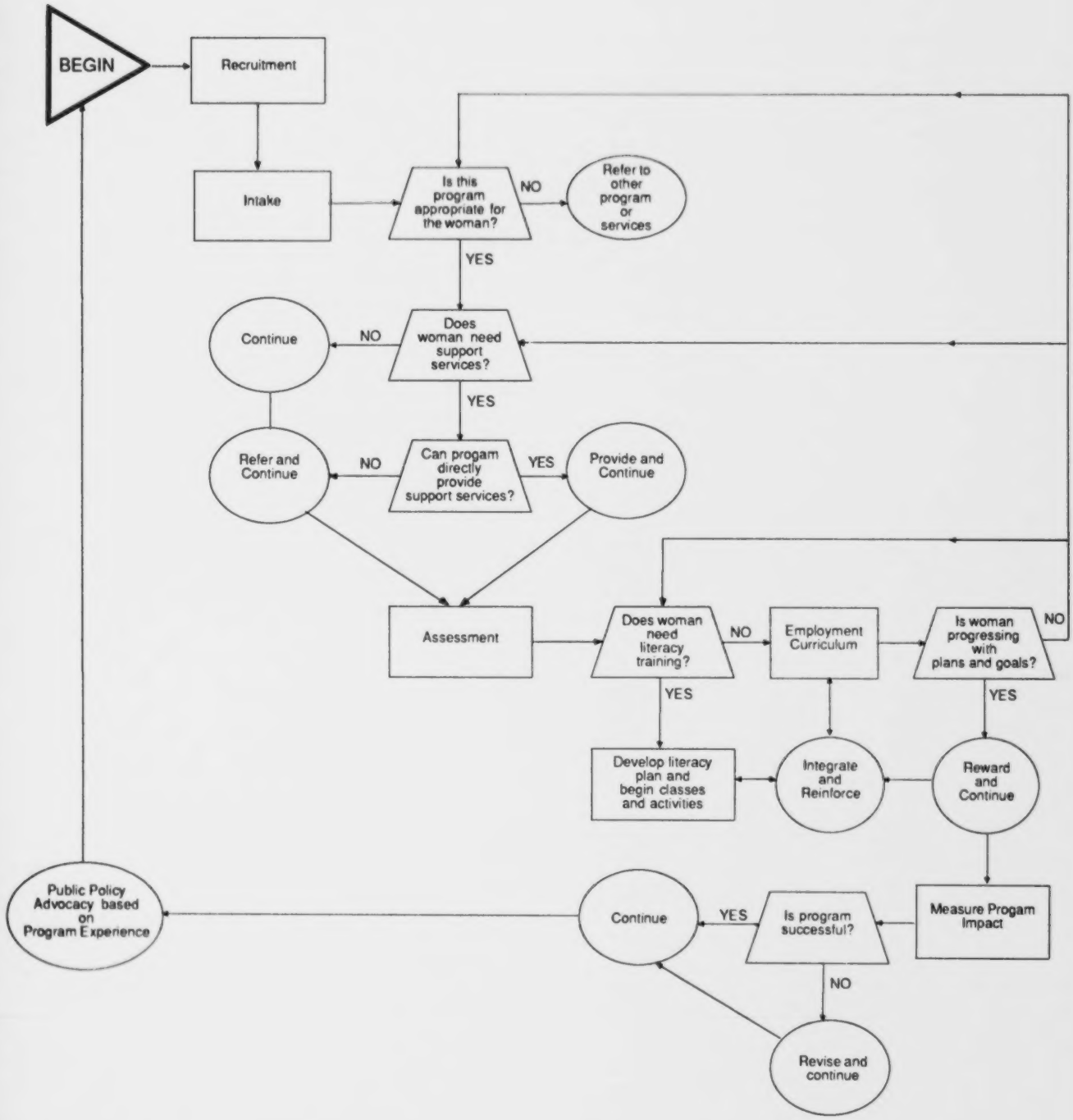
| **Internal Barriers:** | **Addressed By:** |
|---|---|
| Low self-esteem | _____ |
| | _____ |
| Self-doubt | _____ |
| | _____ |
| Powerlessness | _____ |
| | _____ |
| Guilt | _____ |
| | _____ |

| **External Barriers:** | **Addressed By:** |
|---|---|
| Environmental instability | _____ |
| | _____ |
| Need for support services | _____ |
| | _____ |
| Inaccessible, inappropriate services | _____ |
| | _____ |
| Goal conflict | _____ |
| | _____ |

**Area 3: Program Additions**

Now that you have a sense of how accessible your program will be, what is required to add a literacy component? A careful review of the chapters on "Shaping the Program," "Getting Started" and "Service Delivery" will provide an idea of what program elements will be necessary to initiate literacy services. The following diagram of the program model may be helpful in visualizing the different program components.

## *Literacy and Employment Training Program Model*



By looking at the answers to your Current Program Components inventory, you will be able to identify gaps in current service delivery. Finding ways to fill those gaps will strengthen your employment training efforts, even if you decide not to embark on the direct provision of literacy services at this time. By completing the assessment process in this chapter, you will perhaps identify new referral sources for your participants to obtain literacy services.

**Area 4: Preliminary Staffing Considerations**

After identifying the program components you will need to add or strengthen, you should decide if you have both the human and financial resources on hand, or if it will be necessary to augment staff and/or funding. A key question for any program operator will be "Do I have to add staff?" You will want to survey existing staff to see if basic skills teaching is in their backgrounds.

**Staffing**

Indicate which program functions you currently fill either with paid staff or volunteers and the areas of expertise. Review resumes or applications to obtain this information, or use conversations or surveys.

| Function | Expertise/Skills |
|---|---|
| Outreach or recruitment | |
| Intake | |
| Assessment | |
| Instructors | |
| Occupational skills | |
| Reading/writing | |
| Mathematics | |
| Communications | |
| Computer | |
| Counselors | |

Job development _____

_____

Placement _____

_____

Administrative support _____

_____

Other _____

_____

It is possible that you will identify current staff who could assume literacy-related functions with some staff development. Alternative resources for teachers and tutors can be volunteers. See the section on staffing in the chapter "Service Delivery" to make an initial assessment of what your staffing requirements might be and where you will need to supplement existing staff.

**Area 5: Funding**

The last step in program assessment concerns potential funding of a literacy component. Are there current funds which can be allocated or will new sources of funding have to be identified and tapped? You will need to decide how much funding is required to implement the kind of literacy training that will be most useful for the women you serve.

You may want to come back to this section after you have worked through the chapters dealing with actual program delivery. But you should read this section first and keep funding considerations in mind as you plan your service delivery.

There are streams of funding in the community targeted to literacy. Tapping into these streams can be a straight-forward process in some instances and a convoluted maze in others.

Federal assistance for adult education and literacy is primarily authorized through the Adult Education Act, which serves about 2.8 million people each year. Other federal programs are authorized to address some component of literacy problems, including illiteracy prevention in Chapter One of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (remedial education for educationally disadvantaged youth); programs for homeless adults, Native Americans and refugees; bilingual vocational training; literacy training in the military; and support to public libraries.

The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act both authorize expenditures of funds for remedial and literacy education for those receiving vocational training. The two set-asides in the Carl Perkins Act for sex equity and for serving single parents/homemakers may be able to support some aspects of your literacy work. JTPA money is more restricted but the 8 percent set-aside for governors to allocate in conjunction with educational activities may also be a source to consider. Usually, very few of these resources are targeted to improve female literacy or to provide needed support services for women with limited basic skills.

You may need to contact your state, city or county departments of education, labor, community development and employment services to identify various sources of funding. Private sources may need to be researched also. There is increasing interest from the business community in literacy because of its impact on the workplace. Some companies are running their own remediation programs and others may be interested in funding community-based efforts.

Sometimes there are competing demands between the expectations of funding sources and the program's goals. For example, JTPA funders usually expect job placement as the end result for a program participant. Your program may serve wom-

en for whom that will be a premature goal—they will require further education and training to secure and maintain economically sustaining employment. Or a funder may only be interested in one approach to providing literacy programming, such as one-to-one tutoring or computer-based training. Keep in mind what a funder will expect before you solicit or accept funding.

There can be advocacy opportunities with the funding community. Providing funders with the "realities" of programming for low-income single mothers may help them to see the conflicts between definitions of "success" for participants and what is really in the woman's best interests. Funders may need to learn that a variety of approaches to providing services will meet the varying needs of women more effectively.

The lack of stable, multi-year funding has always been a problem for community-based nonprofit employment programs. If you can work to secure a two- or three-year commitment from a private or public source, you will have more freedom to develop your program. Often one source of funding will only cover certain elements of the program and you must piece together various sources to cover all components.

There is a tendancy among public source funders to equate "cost-effective" with "inexpensive." This is probably a counter-productive equation when dealing with programming for low-income women who have many needs. Cost-effective can mean "rich" or comprehensive services for as many women as possible if the return on the investment is family economic independence.

Balancing your funding base against your program standards and the needs of your target client population can be tough. There is a real need for communities to facilitate the development of multi-source funding packages and partnerships that do not violate the principles of programs.

### Funding Sources

List current sources of program funding and indicate whether or not they can be used to fund a literacy component. A preliminary budget will need to cover: overhead, staff salary and benefits, program materials, administrative support, support services and possibly staff development. (See the section on budget in the chapter "Shaping the Program.")

| **Public Sources of Funds** | **Amount** |
|---|---|
| ___Adult Basic Education Act | _____ |
| ___JTPA | _____ |
| ___Carl Perkins | _____ |
| ___Other federal | _____ |
| ___City/County | _____ |
| ___State | _____ |
| ___Other | _____ |

| Private Sources of Funds | Amount |
|---|---|
| ___Individual contributions | _____ |
| ___Foundations | _____ |
| ___Corporations | _____ |
| ___United Way | _____ |
| ___Fees | _____ |
| ___Other | _____ |

**Five Questions**

After gathering data within the five areas outlined above, you may want to answer these five questions based on your findings as a quick way to determine the feasibility and appropriateness of adding a literacy component.

1. Are we serving low-income single mothers or do we want to? Yes___ No___
2. Are we already providing employment-related training and some level of support services? Yes___ No___
3. Do we believe that building literacy skills will assist our participants? Yes___ No___
4. Do we believe that we can secure needed human resources? Yes___ No___
5. Do we believe that we can secure needed financial resources? Yes___ No___

A NO answer to any of these five questions is an indication that key barriers to integrating literacy into your employment program exist and must be addressed.

## *Community Assessment*

There are four key reasons to take the time to do an assessment of your community before making a final decision about adding a literacy component:

1. By knowing in advance who else is providing literacy services and what population they are serving, you can avoid duplication of services—or identify a service gap that you may be able to fill.

2. Because this program model focuses on combining literacy with employment training, it is necessary to have as clear a picture as possible of the economic/employment outlook for your community—why train women for jobs that will not exist in the future?

3. Identifying potential linkages or partnerships with literacy or other social services will strengthen your own program. Building referral relationships for recruitment, assessment, support services and other components can make the difference between a program that functions at a minimum level and one that is dynamic.

4. Having community data collected will be useful in making your case to potential funders for providing literacy services. Some funders require that a program have conducted such an assessment. By demonstrating how your program fits into the community picture of services, you will establish your own credibility.

The following worksheet is to be used to profile your community. You may have some of this information already because of your on-going program work and fundraising efforts. Contact appropriate local or state agencies to fill in your knowledge gaps. Be tenacious! Sometimes the data you want will not be readily available—if that is the case, you can turn it into an advocacy opportunity. Point out to the agency that by not collecting such information, certain populations within the community are not recognized and may be passed over for targeted services.

## Community Profile

Complete each section of the worksheet. Potential sources of information are indicated within the parenthesis—the names of these agencies may vary and you may need to contact them at the city, county or state levels as appropriate for your location.

**Population of Low-Income Women** (Department of Social or Human Services)

How many families are headed by women_____

What percentage of them live in poverty_____

What is the unemployment rate for these women_____

What is the racial breakdown of those families_____

What is the average educational level of those women_____

What is the average length on AFDC_____

**Projected Economic Picture** (Department of Community Development)

Has your immediate region lost or gained jobs in the past two years_____

What job loss or gain is projected in the next two years_____

In what four occupational areas is growth most projected over the next five years_____

Geographically, where is most job development occurring in your community_____

In what kind of job development/economic development activity have the following monies been invested in your locale:

municipal_____

county_____

state_____

federal_____

What kind of jobs have been developed in these activities; what target populations have benefitted from this job creation_____

**Projected Demographics** (Council of Governments, Chamber of Commerce, United Way)

Is the local population expected to decline or grow_____

Which demographic groups (age, race/ethnicity) are expected to decline/grow_____

Where will people come from or move to_____

What are the major reasons for this trend_____

**Projected Employment Picture** (Department of Labor or Employment Services)

What is current unemployment rate_____

What is racial and gender breakdown of that rate_____

_____

How many women now work in nontraditional jobs_____

_____

What is current rate of working poor women_____

_____

What will be the growth sectors for jobs_____

_____

What skills will these jobs require_____

_____

Where will the needed labor force come from_____

_____

**The School System** (Department of Education or Public Instruction)

What is the average drop-out rate for females_____

_____

Are there adult education or career development centers_____

_____

Are there any community colleges_____

_____

Are there any vocational schools_____

_____

Are schools serving displaced homemakers, pregnant and/or parenting teens, low-income single mothers

_____

**Current State of Literacy** (Department of Education or Public Instruction)

What percentage of population is illiterate_____

_____

How many of those are women_____

_____

How many women are being served in literacy programs_____

_____

What grade levels are being accepted into programs_____

_____

**What Programs are Doing Literacy**

Check the programs operating literacy components in your community; indicate the number or percentage of low-income women they are serving and if the program provides support services.

___Schools

___PLUS

___Project Lift

___Literacy Volunteers of America

___Public libraries

___Literacy assistance centers

___Community development agencies

___GED preparation programs

___Technical and community colleges

___Vocational education centers

___Urban League

___Businesses

___Unions

___Churches

___70001 (youth serving)

___JTPA programs

___Other private and/or nonprofit

**What is the Local and State Response to Literacy**

Has a task force or other group been appointed by the mayor to address the issue—what is its function

Has a task force or other group been appointed by the governor to address the issue—what is its function

Are any women represented on these groups

Are any low-income women or men represented

Are any other education, labor or social service agencies addressing the issue _____

_____

Has there been any action in the state legislature or local city/county council on the issue _____

_____

**What Funding Streams are Available for Literacy in Your Community?**

What federal money is available _____

_____

What state money is available _____

_____

What local money is available _____

_____

Are local education agencies the only "acceptable" recipients of such funds _____

_____

Can community-based organizations receive funds _____

_____

What has been the trend in literacy funding _____

_____

**What Social Service or Other Agencies are Serving Women**

Indicate which programs, including your own, are providing these services for low-income women and if they are now or could be a source of referrals.

| | *Agency* | *Referral?* |
|---|---|---|
| ___Employment training | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| ___Domestic violence | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| ___Rape crisis | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| ___Advocacy | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| ___Child care | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |

___Medical

___Legal

___Emergency housing

___Welfare-to-work

___Public assistance

___Multi-purpose

As you complete the profile of your community, you may see trends emerging and get a feel for the "literacy philosophy" of your locale. By linking this to your program assessment, you will be able to decide whether or not to initiate a literacy component. Undergoing this kind of assessment is useful, no matter what your decision, and will have been time well spent.

# IV. SHAPING THE PROGRAM

Three elements will set the overall framework for your literacy training and must be compatible with the employment-related aspect of your program. The three elements are: adopting a set of standards from which to operate, identifying a client population and establishing a budget.

## Standards

By *standards* we mean a set of general operating guidelines. All of the specific service delivery methods and strategies implemented should embody these standards. Those presented in this section represent general standards for the overall program and link literacy with employment training. Standards which apply to the specific program elements—recruitment, intake and assessment, program design, staffing, instructional strategies, support services, evaluation, rewards and measuring program impact—will be presented within the chapters outlining those sections.

The following general standards were identified by the research site programs and agreed upon as providing an "ideal" to reach for in programming. If all of the standards presented in this manual could be met at all times, the research sites believe that literacy programs would be operating at a maximum level of effectiveness. However, it must be recognized that what our organizations are able to do programmatically, given the limited resources we all face, often may fall short of our own plans and expectations. Having standards to guide our actions and to measure our achievements against is important for that very reason.

### General Standards

1. The program should define literacy as including the basic education skills of reading, writing and mathematics, as well as familiarity with computers and critical thinking skills.
2. The literacy/employment training program should be designed to meet the needs of low-income and single mothers.
3. The program should have clearly articulated standards for all components and these should be shared with students and staff.
4. The program should teach literacy skills on-site as a means of reaching the eventual goal of employability or economic self-sufficiency for the women and their families.
5. Staff, volunteers and agency administration should agree with the philosophy that literacy is a critical part of employment training and should work to integrate that philosophy throughout all program elements.
6. The program should recognize the importance of intergenerational literacy—mothers helping children and children helping mothers—and include activities which promote intergenerational learning within the employment training context.
7. The program should establish goals and objectives for services based on the standards for each component and program success should be measured against the attainment of these standards.

## Defining the Client Population

In order to begin implementing the general standards, it is important to define the client population and then to budget appropriate funding to serve that population. Because you operate an employment training program serving women, the population served by a literacy component may not be different from your current clientele. This may, however, be an opportunity to extend your program to previously unserved women; particularly women whom you have turned away because of their low basic education skills. It is possible to serve a wide range of women even if you need to establish a grade-level cut-off for entry to your programs.

The following checklist will suggest overlapping categories or characteristics of the women eligible for your program. Use this list to get a clear picture of the women you will be serving and/or will need to target during recruitment efforts.

### Client Population

Refer to the inventory on client participants that you completed as part of the program self-assessment preliminary step. Check the categories you will serve and need to target during recruitment; indicate the numbers or percentages of women you intend to serve within each category.

____Low-income women_____

____Single female parents/heads of household_____

____Race and ethnic diversity_____

____ black_____

____ white_____

____ Latina_____

____ Asian_____

____ Native American_____

____ Other_____

____Age diversity_____

____Unemployed_____

____Under-employed_____

Grade levels attained_____

(Note: there is often a difference between the school grade level last attended and the actual skill level of the woman.)

## *Budget*

There is no standard budget amount attached to providing literacy services; some costs can possibly be absorbed in your current budget for employment training. Clearly there will be some overlap of expenditures as you integrate literacy with employment training.

### Preliminary Budget

Fill in estimated budget amounts for the following categories:

Staff—labor and fringe benefits_____

Materials—instructional, assessment or diagnostic_____

Volunteer travel stipends_____

Telephone_____

Postage_____

Office and instructional supplies_____

Reproduction_____

Staff development_____

Support services_____

Overhead—rent, utilities, etc._____

Other_____

The program functions to be covered by a comprehensive budget should include: recruitment, intake, assessment, instruction, support services, evaluation, measurement of program impact, follow-up and advocacy.

Once you develop your literacy-related budget, you should estimate what the projected cost per participant will be. Adding literacy services will most likely increase your overall cost—which may need to be interpreted to funders. It is helpful to maintain separate documentation of literacy costs.

Most programs tend to have multi-sector funding to support their literacy activities. Combinations of federal, state and local monies (public and private) are used. Linkages with other institutions are sometimes helpful; for example, you may be able to have a local public school system assign you a teacher and subsidize the cost.

**Funding/Budget Worksheet**

Use the following worksheet to identify sources of funding you already have or want to obtain, the amounts necessary, and what budget items will be covered. Remember, you may be able to begin introducing some elements of literacy work within your current program without needing significant amounts of new money.

| **Public Sources** | **Have/Want** | **Amount** | **Will Cover** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Adult Basic Education | | | |
| JTPA | | | |
| Carl Perkins | | | |
| State | | | |
| City | | | |
| County | | | |
| Other | | | |
| **Private Sources** | **Have/Want** | **Amount** | **Will Cover** |
| Individuals | | | |
| Foundations | | | |
| Corporations | | | |
| Churches | | | |
| United Way | | | |
| Other | | | |

This section will discuss the standards, implementation strategies and issues related to recruitment, intake and assessment. These are the first points of contact women will have with your program. Careful attention to how these three program elements are conducted will help to avoid later problems of participant retention, staff frustration and low measures of program impact.

## Recruitment

You are already doing recruitment. You may not have to alter very much about your current process if you are successful in drawing women into your program. If you have identified new groups of women that you want to serve through the introduction of a literacy component, you may need to revise your methods in order to reach them with your program message.

### Standards

1. The program should set targets for its recruitment efforts based on the client population to be served.
2. The program should develop strong message statements that relate to the needs of the targeted women.
3. The program should develop strong message statements that relate literacy and employability training.
4. The program should always be clear about what is being offered in terms of services and expected outcomes.
5. The program should always be clear about what its enrollment and instructional processes are; these should be communicated to prospective participants.

### Implementation Strategies

It is important to start with the women whom you are already serving in your employability training. Your addition of a literacy component has come about just as much from an identification of their needs as from identifying a new population of women to serve.

It is often helpful to have input from your current participants as you develop messages and images about your program. You may want to "field test" any materials with them and make alterations accordingly. This not only gives your messages credibility, but it develops interest and investment among your current learners in the new literacy component.

The most effective messages and images are the ones that are the most simple and direct—visual and verbal. Two messages that have been identified as key are: (1) training can lead to a better job and a more secure economic future and (2) improvement in a mother's literacy may assist her child's educational attainments. An over-reliance on written materials can backfire—the women you wish to reach may not be able to read or fully understand them.

Five different approaches for recruitment are suggested which can be used singularly or, usually with more effect, in combination:

1. *Staff*: if possible, have a member of your staff function as the recruitment specialist who can coordinate materials development, make presentations, establish referral contacts and do any other recruitment-related work.

2. *Peer*: some of the most effective recruitment is done by current participants or graduates of your program; they are credible to others and will tell the straight story about your program.

3. *Materials*: public service announcements on television or radio; program newsletters; flyers in libraries and women's centers or other locations; presentations at community-based and social service organizations, schools, job fairs and community events; newspaper ads; ads on public transportation (bus and subway); bilingual messages.

4. *Orientations*: holding an orientation session prior to intake can be an effective recruitment tool, particularly if you go into a neighborhood center, church or school to explain the program.

5. *Referral*: build linkages with the local departments of human services and employment services, Private Industry Council, local literacy programs, housing projects, community colleges and other adult education institutions and centers. These can be sources of participants, particularly if you can serve women that they cannot.

Developing an overall plan for recruitment that targets your audience, sets goals and objectives, combines outreach methods and is multi-media is important. Use the Planning Tool for Successful Recruitment Efforts at the close of this chapter to help you evaluate your current efforts and revise them if needed.

**Issues to Be Considered**

* You will probably have to recruit more women than you can really accept into the program because some will be drop-outs along the way. Indications of interest in attending the program from some women may not translate into actual enrollments at intake. Keeping a list of women you cannot immediately offer enrollment to will be a good resource when you need to fill vacancies caused by attrition.

* The timing between your recruitment process and the day a student actually enrolls in and begins the program can be critical. Too much time will increase the number of women who do not complete the intake process. Understanding the barriers to a low-income woman's entry into such a program will underscore the need for quick placement in the program—allowing for child care and other support services to be arranged.

* If you are recruiting for a nontraditional occupational skills program, you may have to overcome the additional barriers facing women going into such vocational areas. In this case, the addition of a literacy component tied to attaining the skills necessary for a higher-wage job may be helpful to your overall recruiting efforts.

## Intake and Assessment Processes

These two processes are often linked together and are presented here in that way. There is, however, an important distinction to be made. *Intake* is the process to determine if the program is right for the woman and vice versa; it may involve testing to determine literacy levels of potential participants. *Assessment* is the process to determine a woman's placement within the program; it too may involve testing.

**Standards**

1. Both the intake and assessment processes should be sensitive to the past educational failure and test anxiety of program participants.
2. Both the intake and assessment processes should take into account each student's specific goals (pass an employment-related test, obtain GED, broaden knowledge, get a job).
3. The intake process should result in **either** program entry or referral to other agencies that may be able to serve the [illegible]
4. The assessment process should be used to determine suitable program options for a woman and not to screen her out of the program.

**Implementation Strategies for Intake**

Personal contact between staff and potential participants is important. Verbally explaining program goals, services and expectations cannot be over stressed.

Many of the women coming to your program will have questions concerning the impact of enrollment on their benefit status with public assistance agencies. Some agencies threaten a benefit reduction or cut-off if a woman enters a training program. Working with the women on a one-to-one basis to deal with these concerns is critical and may involve your program in advocacy efforts with the woman and the agency.

The intake process should be a time when the "fit" between potential student and the program can be determined. If you have set minimum literacy level entry standards, you will need to identify what level of literacy skills a woman has before she can enter your program. Developing clear guidelines around this will save frustration on the part of both staff and students. Testing will probably be a part of your intake process.

You will need to determine if your pro-

gram will do the intake and assessment testing or whether it will be carried out by another agency, such as a referring program or educational institution. If you will do the testing yourself, familiarity with a variety of tests and how to administer them will be necessary for your staff. If another agency will carry out the process, you will need to work with that staff to ensure that your program's philosophy concerning testing is known and respected.

Delaying formal testing until students feel more comfortable in the program environment is a useful strategy to obtain more accurate test results. Sometimes this means administering tests several hours or several days into an intake process. Keep in mind the generally negative feeling toward and high level of anxiety around testing that most women will have. Repetition of the purpose of testing and clarification of the use of test results must be part of the process.

Standardized tests are most often recognized by funders and others who will want to measure program success in terms of grade levels attained. A number of such tests are available (see the end of this chapter for a description of and ordering information for some commonly used tests). However, to order some of these tests, the administering individual or organization is required to register credentials with the test publisher/distributer.

Sometimes, proof of one of the following is required of the test administrator: teaching certification or license, psychology training at the master's degree level, membership in the American Psychological Association or other similar professional organization, or equivalent professional training and experience. The buyer/administrator must also certify that testing will be secure and administered according to guidelines.

Most standardized tests contain race, sex and class bias in their questions and the scores do not always accurately reflect the skill level or learning potential of the woman tested. If you can supplement or replace standardized tests with staff-developed materials, you will get a more accurate picture of your participants' skill levels. This will be important when you do a complete assessment to place the woman within your program.

**Intake Checklist**

You may want to use this checklist to determine if your current intake process includes components that help clarify the expectations of the student. Mark the elements included during intake and explain how each is implemented:

___Reviews objectives of program_____

_____

___Encourages student to articulate own goals_____

_____

___Discusses what are realistic expectations_____

_____

___Discusses potential barriers to success such as need for child care or possible health problems___

_____

___Tests for basic education skill levels_____

_____

___Collects demographic data on applicant for statistical purposes only_____

___Refers student to another program if appropriate_____

You may have a formal contract which is signed by the student and the staff members when a woman is accepted into the program. This type of contract outlines the rules and regulations on attendance, punctuality and other behavior, as well as what the learner can expect from the program. (Refer to the sample contract at the end of this chapter.)

**Implementation Strategies for Assessment**

Assessment should not be based solely on test results. A composite of the woman's skills and skill needs, related to her goals and the expectations of the program, must be outlined. This is the time to work with each woman to develop her plan or goal statements. (See sample form at the end of this chapter.)

You will want to map out an individualized remediation plan based on diagnostic evaluations, interpretation of placement tests, identified deficiencies and proficiencies and skill levels. This plan can also double as an evaluation tool—as new skills are achieved progress can be recorded.

It is very important that the assessment process incorporates input from the individual woman. Each participant should meet with a staff member to review her test results and any other diagnostic evaluations and to discuss the remediation plan. Individual conferences allow the women to provide input into their own plans and to get an accurate summary of their skills. A remediation schedule can be negotiated, session guidelines reviewed and initial appointments made. Periodic conferences can be held to update the plan and promote a general feeling of accomplishment.

You will find ongoing evaluation of a woman's progress easier and more meaningful if you use the assessment process to establish baselines in skills. All assessment results and the decisions made should be documented. (See the section on evaluation in the chapter "Service Delivery.")

**Issues to Be Considered**

* In general, the higher the entry skills of a program participant, the better the chance for her success. While a program may need to decide a cut-off point for entry into the literacy and employability program, it should always be done from the vantage point of best serving the women in light of individual and program goals—rather then to meet funder requirements.

* It is difficult to walk the line between meeting funder requirements for grade-level attainments and devising intake and assessment processes that are not discouraging to the participant. You may need to negotiate with funders to ensure that your overall program length is sufficient time to attain expected outcomes.

## *Planning Tool for Successful Recruitment Efforts*

Use this tool to begin planning for your successful recruitment efforts.

**Set Your Strategy**

Goal statement_____

_____

Measurable objectives_____

_____

Target populations_____

_____

Timetable_____

_____

**Define Your Message**

Who are we_____

_____

What is our program_____

_____

How does our program benefit individual women_____

_____

**Choose Your Medium of Delivery**

Print_____

_____

Television_____

_____

Radio_____

_____

Video_____

_____

People_____

_____

Other_____

_____

**Measure Your Impact**

How will we know we are reaching our targets_____

_____

**Evaluate Your Results**

Did we meet our objectives_____

_____

What can we do differently next time_____

_____

**What Resources are Currently Available for Successful Recruitment**

Staff_____

_____

Participants/Graduates_____

_____

Linkages with other organizations_____

_____

Money_____

_____

Materials_____

_____

Time_____

_____

Access to media_____

_____

Institutional support_____

_____

Consultants_____

_____

Other_____

_____

**If Additional Resources are Needed, How Will We Secure Them?**

| Resource needed: | Potential source: |
| --- | --- |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |



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## Standardized Test Information

### Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)

CTB/McGraw-Hill, 2500 Garden Road, Monterey, CA 93940 (1–800-538–9547; in CA 1–800-682–9222); catalog available

***Description***: assesses reading, mathematics and language skills including seven subtests for reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, language mechanics, language expression, spelling, computation, math concepts and applications.

***Scoring/Measurement***: three types of scores can be derived including scale scores, grade equivalents and percentile ranks.

***Comments***: four test levels are available including easy, medium, difficult and advanced; test period can be 1½ to 3½ hours long; has been reviewed for ethnic and gender bias.

### Differential Aptitude Tests (DAT)

The Psychological Corporation, 555 Academic Court, San Antonio, TX 78204 (1–800-228–0752); catalog available

***Description***: provides profile in eight abilities including verbal reasoning, numerical ability, abstract reasoning, clerical speed and accuracy, mechanical reasoning, space relations, spelling and language usage.

***Scoring/Measurement***: one numerical score for each of the eight tests plus an index of scholastic ability.

***Comments***: test period is 3–4 hours; has been criticized for including sexist and racist imagery and language.

### Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE)

The Psychological Corporation (see DAT above)

***Description***: measures basic educational achievement of adults who have not completed a formal eighth-grade education; four subtests include vocabulary, reading, spelling and arithmetic (computation and problem solving).

***Scoring/Measurement***: Levels I and II score in grade equivalents; Level III scores as a percentile rank.

***Comments***: Level I=first to sixth grade; Level II=third to ninth grade; Level III =ninth to twelfth grade; some tests are dictated; test period is 2–3½ hours.

### Basic Occupational Literacy Test (BOLT)

United States Employment Service, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 (202-783-3238)

***Description***: intended for use with disadvantaged adults and school dropouts; four subtests including reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, arithmetic computation and arithmetic reasoning.

***Scoring/Measurement***: scores from each subtest translate to General Education Development (GED) levels.

***Comments***: test period is 1 hour.

### California Achievement Test Writing Assessment System (CAT)

CTB/McGraw-Hill (see TABE above)

***Description***: measures writing skills including a Writing Assessment Guide.

***Scoring/Measurement***: options include assessments of holistic, analytic, primary trait or a combination.

***Comments***: four types of prompts are available including descriptive, narrative, expository and persuasive; grade levels three through twelve.

### General Educational Development (GED) Practice Tests

Cambridge Adult Education Company, 888 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10106 (1-800-221-4764); catalog available

***Description***: official practice tests for the GED (high school equivalency) test; five subtests including writing skills, social studies, science, mathematics, interpreting literature and the arts; includes required writing sample.

***Scoring/Measurement***: GED scoring.

***Comments***: available in Spanish and Canadian editions, large print and audio cassettes; test period is half the length of the actual GED test but is equal in difficulty.

Other publishers and test materials sources from whom catalogs are available:

* Stoelting, 1350 South Kostner Avenue, Chicago, IL 60623 (312-522-4500)
* Fearon Education, 19 Davis Drive, Belmont, CA 94002 (415-592-7810)
* Steck-Vaughn Company, P.O. Box 2028, Austin, TX 78768 (1-800-531-5015); in TX 1-800-252-9317)

## Sample Contract

I, _____, a participant in (name of program) agree to the following:

***Participation***: I understand that active participation in all classes and related activities and completion of assignments are important and I agree to do so to the best of my ability.

***Attendance***: I understand that regular attendance is essential to successful completion of this program and I am expected to attend every class. If I must be absent for health or other valid reasons, I will promptly notify the program.

***Punctuality***: I understand that being on time is also essential to successful completion of this program. Absences and lateness will be recorded and considered during evaluation of my performance and for continuation in the program.

***Safety***: I understand that in order to ensure my safety and that of others in the program, I must observe all safety rules in the classroom and laboratories as outlined by the instructors.

Note: if there are any other requirements of the program they should be included in the contract.

_____ _____

Participant's Signature Date

We, the staff of (name of program), agree to the following:

***Classes***: We will provide organized classes in basic education skills, computer familiarity, occupational skills, employability skills (classes offered by the program).

***Assistance***: We will be available to assist you in resolving problems related to child care, transportation, health, housing (support services offered by the program).

***Career Development***: We will assist you in preparing for a job, exploring nontraditional options, developing a resume, learning interview techniques, conducting a job search and knowing your rights on the job (sessions offered by the program).

Note: any other program components—internship experiences, on-the-job-training, mentorships, placement assistance, follow-up activities—should be included.

_____ _____

Executive Director Date

_____ _____

Instructor/Counselor Date

## Sample Individualized Plan

(You can have the program participant fill out this kind of form individually for review with a staff person or it can be completed jointly.)

Name_____ Current Date_____

S.S. Number_____ Date of Birth_____

Address_____

_____ Telephone_____

---

Name of Contact Person in Emergency_____

Telephone_____ Relationship_____

---

### Educational History and Work Experience

Through Secondary Level (circle last grade completed)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Name of Last School Attended_____

Address_____

_____

Dates Attended (months/years) From _____ To _____

Received Diploma (date) _____ or GED (date) _____

Post-Secondary Level (circle last year completed)

1 2 3 4 5 6

Name of Last School Attended_____

Address_____

Dates Attended (months/years) From _____ To _____

Subjects Studied_____

_____

Received Degree (name) _____ (date) _____

Most Recent Work Experience

Name of Company_____

Address_____

_____ Phone_____

Job Title_____

Duties_____

_____

Machines and Equipment Used_____

_____

Supervisor's Name and Title_____

Dates Worked (month/year) From_____ To_____

Salary (starting) $_____ (ending) $_____

Reason for Leaving_____

Military Service (U.S. Military Service only)

Branch of Service_____

Dates Served (month/year) From_____ To_____

Last Rank Held_____ Type of Discharge_____

Job Speciality or Type of Training_____

_____

_____

***Other Skills, Experiences, Abilities, Activities***

List Certificates, Licenses, Bonds, etc._____

_____

List Special Abilities (drive vehicles other than car, operate power tools, make home or auto repairs, etc.)

_____

_____

List Skills Used in Hobbies or Recreational Activities_____

_____

_____

List Community Groups (belong to church, club, sorority, etc.)_____

_____

_____

List Skills Used in Volunteer Work_____

_____

_____

_____

***Results of Intake and Assessment Tests***

Test_____ Score_____

Test_____ Score_____

Test_____ Score_____

What Areas of Strength and Need for Improvement Are Indicated?

| Strengths | Need Improvement |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

***Factors That May Affect Program Participation or Employment***

Marital Status (check one) ___Single (never married)

___Separated ___Divorced ___Married

Number of Dependant Children _____

| Names | Ages | Need Child Care |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Do Any of the Children Needing Day Care Have Chronic Medical Problems or Other Special Considerations

_____

_____

Personal Medical History

Date of Last Physical_____ Current Physical Condition_____

Number of School or Work Days Missed in Last Year_____

Need/Wear Glasses_____ Need/Wear Hearing Aid_____

Is There Anything about Current Physical or Mental Health that Could Affect Program or Work Participation_____

_____

Are Any Medications Being Taken on a Regular Basis_____

_____

Doctor's or Clinic's Name_____

_____

Address_____

_____

_____Phone_____

List Scheduled Appointments_____

_____

Transportation

Do You Have a Valid Driver's License_____

Do You Have Regular Access to a Car_____

Do You Have Reasonable Access to Public Transportation_____

How Do You Plan to Travel to the Program Each Day_____

_____

Have You Ever Been Convicted of a Criminal Offense_____

_____

Are You Currently Involved in Any Legal Situations that Could Affect Program Participation_____

_____

***Financial Resources***

What Financial Resources Are Currently Available to You

____Salary from Employment

____Social Security

____Welfare/AFDC

____Disability Payments

____Unemployment Insurance

____Child Support

____Food Stamps

____Medicaid

____Other (specify)_____

How Do You Plan to Meet Your Living Expenses and Financial Obligations during the Next (period of program)_____

_____

If You Are Not Receiving Some of the Above Forms of Assistance, Would You Like Help in Seeing if You Might Be Eligible_____

(Indicate which ones)_____

Are You a Client of Vocational Rehabilitation Services_____

## *Employment Goals*

What Is Your Short-Term (1–6 months) Employment Goal_____

What Amount of Time Are You Able to Spend Commuting_____

What Is Your Long-Term (1–2 years) Employment Goal_____

What Barriers Stand Between You and Your Employment Goals_____

How Can this Program Help You with Those Barriers_____

| What Steps Do You Have to Take to Meet Your Goals | Dates |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Am I Going to Take the Above Steps

____Yes ____No ____Undecided

**If the Answer is Yes, I Make the Following Self-Contract:**

I, _____, have decided to achieve the goal of _____

_____.

The first step I will make to reach this goal will be to_____

_____

by the target date of _____.

_____ _____

Signature Date

***Achievements While in Program***

| Activity | Date |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |



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Service delivery consists of program design, staffing, instructional strategies, support services, evaluation of progress and rewards for program participation. In particular, two of the general standards presented in the chapter "Shaping the Program," should guide overall service delivery:

1. The literacy/employment training program should be designed to meet the needs of low-income and single mothers.
2. The program should teach literacy skills on-site as a means of reaching the eventual goal of employability or economic self-sufficiency for the women and their families.

## Program Design

The barrier of low self-esteem is perhaps one of the most powerful for low-income single mothers. Therefore, the design of your program must always speak to reinforcing the learner's self-concept. Each woman will bring to the program skills gained from her day-to-day struggle for survival. She may not, however, know how to apply those skills within a broader context.

### Standards

1. The program should incorporate a learner-centered training approach, building on the participant's competencies, life experiences, interests and goals.
2. The program should always treat the learner as an active participant.
3. The program needs to provide a continuum of services, whether through on-site options or by referral to other appropriate agencies.
4. The length of the program should be defined—the remediation process must appear manageable; yet options for continuation or dropout and return to the program must be available.

### Implementation Strategies

A major decision to make at this point is whether or not you will have a program that is open entry/open exit or one that is more formal, so that a student must enter at a specified time and complete a structured curriculum. You will probably need to make this decision based on your employability curriculum, the requirements of your funder, the professional advice of your teachers and the flexibility of your resources. (See a sample course schedule at the end of this chapter.)

The best way to ensure implementation of program standards is to build them into course objectives. Outlining what the goals are for your literacy classes and activities is a way to articulate expected outcomes. You may want to use the following planning guide to outline goals, objectives and activities for each literacy class—or to incorporate literacy goals in each of your employment-related classes.

You will need to decide if your literacy work will be self-paced or structured. Much may depend on the range of literacy abilities grouped in one class. Experience has shown that maximum learning usually takes place when women with a narrower range of skill levels are placed together. Self-paced instruction, whether conducted on computers or in a classroom setting, may work better when wider ranges of ability levels must be grouped together.

In designing the overall literacy curriculum, build on learners' strengths and focus on their life and employment skills. Using materials that recognize cultural differences and women's history, as well as build cognative skills is important. If your program includes occupational skill training, you should use reading and math material related to that occupation as part of your class materials.

Use a variety of instructional materials, some commercial, some staff-developed, some prepared by other women's literacy and employment programs and some taken from everyday experience. General teaching resources include reading comprehension texts and materials, rapid reading materials, language arts and spelling texts, math workbooks, learning kits and testing

**Course Planning Guide**

Name of class_____

Goal_____

Objectives: 1._____

2._____

3._____

Activities: 1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

6._____

7._____

8._____

9._____

10._____

Course meets: Days_____ Hours_____

packages. Employment-related magazines, as well as general periodicals and newspapers develop reading and job search skills.

Other program equipment you can use includes personal computers; educational software such as Math Maze, Writing I, Bank Street Writer Plus and Word Attack; calculators; adding machines; and audio-visual and VCR equipment.

Build participant decision making into as many phases of the curriculum as possible. Choosing reading texts, topics for writing assignments and other decisions, whether made individually or by a group, will reinforce the women's sense of participation in the learning process.

Physical environment is important. The history of failure with the school system will make classroom-type settings feel intimidating. As much as possible, arrange furniture so as to facilitate interaction among participants and staff, rather than duplicate rows of desks and chairs. Do include blackboards, easels with newsprint pads, magazines, books, posters, pictures and other supportive materials. Choose items that reflect the racial and cultural diversity of your population.

**Issues to Be Considered**

* Teaching adult women is different from teaching younger students because adults learn in different ways and are faced with different barriers and problems that can be complex. Program design and instructional approaches need to be reflective of that difference.

* Some of the program participants may see literacy training as a deferment of their primary goal, such as getting a job. All through the process of recruitment, intake and assessment, as well as in actual program delivery, the connection between building literacy skills and being successful in employment needs to be emphasized.

* Students will miss classes. The barriers related to family responsibilities, health and environment will intrude on the learning process. Programs need to devise flexible approaches to deal with absences. Accommodating legitimate reasons for missing classes will send a strong message to the woman that your program really understands her needs and values her. Dealing firmly with other types of absences is important. A contract between the program and the participant can provide leverage in discussing a woman's responsibility to uphold her agreement to attendance, punctuality and work expectations.

There are two critical points in the participant's training experience where attrition is most likely to occur. The first is during the initial weeks of enrollment in the program. Some students realize that the program does not meet their expectations and is not appropriate for them. Others find that the return to the classroom setting and exposure to new subjects creates anxiety, which can be aggravated by poor test results. Still others may find that their life problems really preclude their participation at this time.

The second peak of attrition occurs midway through the program. As students take the initiative to move to economic independence for the first time, they may become anxious and fearful. Others no longer feel challenged and begin to doubt the benefit of the program. Students have noted that boredom and frustration result in more absenteeism and tardiness in the latter part of the program, as the novelty wears off. Programs which anticipate these patterns and deal with the underlying causes may be able to reduce attrition at these key points.

## Staffing

It is important to work with staff who understand and accept integrating literacy work with employment training. Additionally, staff should have the ability to produce supplementary assessment and instructional materials.

### Standards

1. The program should choose staff who will accept and implement the program's philosophy and overall standards.
2. The program should create as positive an environment for staff as possible, including competitive salary levels, benefits and adequate materials.
3. The program should first use current staff, providing for additional training when needed.
4. The program staff should reflect the racial, ethnic, social and age diversity of the participants.
5. The program should use a case management and/or team teaching approach.

### Implementation Strategies

The staff of the literacy training component will be part of your overall agency staff and their job functions may overlap from literacy to employment training, particularly in the case of recruiters, intake staff and counselors. There are several key staff roles to be covered when implementing a literacy component; each carries specific responsibilities:

*Literacy, basic skills, adult basic education instructor*: this is the person(s) who will actually develop the curriculum and teach reading, writing, mathematics, computer and thinking skills. At a minimum, one person may carry each of these subject areas, or you may hire specialists for each.

You will want to consider specific qualifications for hiring instructional staff. For example:

1. bachelor's degree in appropriate field;
2. minimum number of years of classroom experience with a background in adult education or GED preparation;
3. ability to develop curricula;
4. proficiency in both oral and written communication;
5. experience or familiarity with computers and computerized instruction;
6. knowledge of a technical employment field, women's employment issues and educational needs of economically disadvantaged population.

*Counselor*: should be able to cover personal issues as well as career exploration, life skills and planning. This person(s) may need to function as a teacher by providing workshops or class sessions in addition to one-on-one counseling and can be the key linkage to support services referrals. The

counselor may also be called upon to help with recruiting and to oversee and administer tests.

Other positions can include:

*Recruiter*: develops and implements efforts to draw targeted women to program. This is usually the position hardest to fund and often considered most expendable; however, this is a critical position. Refer to the chapter "Getting Started."

*Employment development specialist*: probably a part of your current employability staff. This person focuses on placing students into internships and developing jobs.

*Child care worker or specialist*: this person could be part of the counseling staff and focuses on assisting participants with securing affordable, accessible and safe child care, or may be the person who provides on-site day care.

Don't forget administrative staff:

*Program director*: manager and coordinator of literacy component; may double as the employment program director.

*Administrative support*: may provide clerical support but can also help to coordinate paperwork related to intake and student assistance and stipends, do follow-up and post-program tracking of students. This position can relieve instructional staff of some paperwork.

**Issues to Be Considered**

* When hiring staff, it is important to consider hiring certified teachers. These persons will generally bring a good grounding in teaching philosophy and lend credibility to your program. However, valuable staff members can come from a wide variety of backgrounds including the public sector, public policy and advocacy work, employment and training, other education and trades work.

* Funding staff development will help to insure a coordinated, coherent educational strategy. Three areas should be considered to maximize staff effectiveness:

1. training in adult learning theory;
2. training in sex equity, class and race issues to ensure sensitivity to participants; and
3. cross-training so that staff understand each other's jobs and can incorporate a wider range of skills (teachers counsel and counselors teach).

* Some funding sources will only cover actual classroom or student contact hours. It is strongly advised that funding be secured that will allow teachers and counselors to spend time in planning and working with other staff to ensure a coherent approach throughout the program.

* Volunteers can be a tremendous resource for your program, functioning as tutors and instructors. Many of these individuals, such as retired teachers from a community college or public school system, are able to bring supplementary materials to the classroom because of their past educational responsibilities. However, the same areas of development necessary for staff are important for volunteers too. You will want to prepare an orientation session and training packet for them.

* Retention problems with participants in your program can sometimes be compounded by staff burnout. Trying to provide staff with as supportive an environment as possible, compensating them fairly, giving them the tools and materials necessary to do their jobs—all cost money but will be cost-effective in the long-run.

* An issue related to student retention is ensuring that some staff members have the responsibility to do individualized follow-up with students who are missing classes or exhibiting negative behavior. This function needs to be built into specific job descriptions.

## Instructional Strategies

There are two components to consider regarding instructional strategies: overall approach and specific instructional strategies to be used in the classrooms. Overall strategies are discussed first, followed by techniques specific to reading/writing and mathematics; however, the standards apply to both components.

**Standards**

1. The program should give primary emphasis to the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics with extensive practice in all three.
2. The program should provide some experience with computers.
3. The program should incorporate de-

velopment of critical thinking skills with basic skills instruction.

4. The program should provide both small group (5–10) and individual instruction including tutoring for students needing additional remedial work.
5. The program should define how many students can be accommodated in each class—the maximum student/teacher ratio should be no more than 25–1.

**Overall Implementation Strategies**

(You may want to refer to the sample curriculum included at the close of this chapter as you read through this section.)

- Lecture only when necessary—include participatory follow-up when you do
- Develop activities based on plans that have been individualized for each student, pinpointing areas of greatest concentration
- Make use of small groups for instruction—divided by skill level when possible
- Create other work groups for completing projects
- Make the women responsible for their own work—or for completing a team project
- Give assignments on the basis of skill level (some read a chapter while others read an entire book)
- Have students learn by doing
  - use life situations as the basis of lessons
  - include hands-on experiences as much as possible
- Set incremental goals with students
  - write a sentence
  - write a paragraph
  - write a story
- Use student-developed material
  - plays (enact them)
  - original texts
  - newsletters
  - story telling
- Use occupational information as classroom reading material
  - job descriptions
  - manuals
  - technical materials
- Use other everyday materials
  - newspapers
  - job applications
  - loan applications
  - housing leases
  - social services forms
- Go on field trips
  - museums
  - galleries
  - schools and training programs
  - work sites
  - cultural events
  - community festivals
- Hold class discussions as a way to teach problem-solving skills and to reinforce oral communication
  - have students pick topics
  - use brainstorming techniques
  - supplement what students know about topics
  - do role-plays
- Show videos and use them as the basis for reading books, writing stories or discussing themes
- Include television and radio as sources of discussion and writing topics—explore depiction of women in those media
- Include voter registration activity and discussions of political issues
- Bring in role models
  - successful graduates
  - women working in traditional and nontraditional jobs
  - women holding public office
  - women in the media
- Develop mentorships between program participants and women in the community
- Place students into internship experiences, reinforcing literacy in an employment setting
- Incorporate on-site parent/child activities whenever possible
  - women reading to their children
  - children helping mothers with homework
  - mothers and children attending cultural and educational activities together
- Include a personal development component in the curriculum

**Reading and Writing Implementation Strategies**

- Encourage learners to take risks in guessing at meanings and answers—they should be rewarded as much for taking the risk as for getting a "right" answer
- Teach "decoding" strategies—how to understand a word within the full context of the sentence
- Stress reading to find meaning
  - include vocabulary testing
  - have women read aloud to each other
  - have women read to their children
  - have women read aloud to themselves
  - encourage reading outside the class
- Use a variety of reading materials
  - by women of color
  - about women's history
  - about achievements of women of color
  - about women in the labor movement
  - standard text books
  - children's books
  - newspapers
  - supplemental material—Scientific Research Association
  - employment-related material—overlap with vocational skills curriculum materials
  - have a lending library on-site (may be able to arrange with a local bookstore or other source to donate books)
- Use games (Scrabble) to enhance spelling, word recognition and other skills
- Stress writing as a means of self-expression and as a way to strengthen reading skills
  - keep daily journals
  - create dialogue
  - use cloze exercises (fill in the blank)
  - give a variety of writing assignments
  - create a student newsletter
- Use computers for word processing student writing efforts, drills, computer assisted-learning—encourage staff to use the computer to create supplemental, self-paced exercises for students

**Math Implementation Strategies**

- Lessen math anxiety by combining individual work with support group experiences
- Math work should be self-paced
- Review basic computational skills
- Link math with other concerns
  - rent
  - public assistance benefits
  - interest rates
  - budgeting
- Overlap math work with the vocational skills curriculum
- Use standardized text books when appropriate
- Use calculators and adding machines
- Teach students computational shortcuts
- Do lots of practice exercises including word problems
- Have students make up math problems from their own experiences
- Work with geographical and sociological data
- Students should check their own work and take responsibility for correcting it

**Issues to Be Considered**

* Sometimes teachers have a tendency to teach to those in a group with the lowest levels of skills, leaving the more advanced students to become bored. Peer tutors or assistant teachers can provide additional help for those needing it—they can give advanced work for those progressing at a faster rate.

* Group dynamics can play a big role in how successful literacy classes are. Staff must be aware that all groups have natural leaders and they can exhibit positive or negative effects on the whole group. Changing the composition of different groups, or dealing with an obstructionist on an individual basis or through counseling can be effective. This is where the case management or team approach is very helpful. If a method of dealing with someone's behavior is agreed upon and followed-through by all staff, the problem is more likely to be solved.

* Out of necessity, you will probably have certain rules and some formal structure to your classes. Some women will see this as a negative—reinforcing bad experiences with institutions. Some programs deliberately try to duplicate on-the-job conditions with strict time and attendance rules (some even

have time clocks). Rather than simply presenting rules to students, staff should make them clear from the start and be willing to discuss them in the context of the class. Sometimes allowing students to develop their own rules can be effective.

## Support Services

Meeting the woman's family-related needs can often play a key role in facilitating a learner to enter your program. Whether the services are provided directly by your program, or the woman is referred to another agency, this area must be addressed by your program structure.

### Standards

1. The program should provide comprehensive support services which facilitate women's participation.
2. Services offered should meet the needs of the women and provide choices for them and their children.
3. The program should explore ways to provide alternative support systems for the women.

### Implementation Strategies

Direct funding or referral for services are the two most common ways to provide support services.

*Child care*: child care is probably the most crucial of the support services. Flexible options need to be considered. Many programs do not offer and do not recommend on-site child care because of licensing and other requirements. To meet the need, your program may be able to offer accurate information on child care options, have referral arrangements with providers, and/or issue vouchers or other payment assistance. Women will require a range of options from infant, toddler to after-school care. Don't forget that sick child care and summer care is also a necessity, even though providers of these services are difficult to locate.

*Adult day care*: the need for adult day care is growing as our general population ages. Providers of this care are even more scarce than affordable, accessible and safe day care. Having referral information is important but this may be a hard service for which to have many options.

*Counseling*: counseling can be considered a support service as well as an instructional component. At least one counselor should be credentialed—having someone with a Master of Social Work or Counseling degree will allow your program to have intern placements from area colleges. As an alternative, you may be able to have a counselor assigned to your program from the community social service agency. Linkages to community services are always critical.

Counseling should be offered in personal, vocational, financial, medical, parenting, life skills and nutritional areas. Some of these topics can be incorporated into classrooms or special workshops, while some may call for individual sessions with students. Parenting classes are particularly of interest when you consider how important their children are to the women. Special emphasis in this area can be a draw to your program. Such classes can include strategies for parents to use in enhancing the educational and learning experiences of their children.

Creating mechanisms for peer support are important. Group work in classrooms helps to meet this need. Setting aside time for program participants to do homework and discuss the week's events or simply as a time to meet and support each other provides the women with a sense of community.

*Transportation*: ensuring the accessibility of your program to students may mean offering them transportation allowances or reimbursement. This should be a direct payment to the student for public transportation costs. Working out transportation paths to and from home and to and from child care may be an important first service of your program.

*Stipends*: some programs are funded such that they can give students a small stipend while attending training. Other successful programs do not provide such a support benefit and this has not been a deterrent to program participation.

*Other supports*: other items that can be helpful to students are assisting them with buying tools and supplies necessary for employment and appropriate clothing. Having a small fund available for emergencies can also be useful.

Creating community teams is one approach to building alternative support systems for the women. People from area business, churches, neighborhoods and former program participants can volunteer to be team members. They "adopt" a woman and her family and meet with the mother at least once a month. The team members function as friends, advisors and supporters—they do not contribute financially to the woman. They may help her with goal setting and problem solving and offer moral support.

**Issues to Be Considered**

* A number of funders (i.e., JTPA) have money available for support services but are not allocating it. You may have to do additional advocacy with funding sources to convince them that providing support services can make the difference in having a successful program that truly meets the needs of the women.

* You might need to consider doing separate fund raising in order to create a support services pool of dollars. Including monies to cover the direct costs of providing these services must be figured into your budget.

## *Evaluation*

It is important for both students and staff to include measures of progress throughout the program. While final program impact is a separate consideration, evaluation will build toward it. (See the chapter "Program Impact.")

**Standards**

1. Evaluation should be on-going throughout the course of the program and areas to be evaluated should be decided.
2. Evaluation should concentrate on the success of the people in the program—measures of program success are different.
3. The program should use multiple and varied tools to evaluate.

**Implementation Strategies**

Evaluation paperwork can play a key role in increasing your credibility when it is time to report to funders, and it can give you important feedback on the effectiveness of your program. Plan ahead to keep track of evaluation data as you go along in the program. Keep files on every student, respecting rules of confidentiality, and put evidence of progress in those files. Whatever goes into a file under analysis of progress should be shared with the student.

Three ways can be utilized to gather evaluative evidence:

1. *Tests*: use standardized tests; use skill mastery tests from vocational areas; give exams (written and oral); use teacher-developed competency or skill inventories. Checking homework and in-class assignments is also important.

2. *Staff input*: discuss student progress in case management meetings where a consensus of staff opinion can be obtained; record classroom or counseling observations of progress or problems.

3. *Student input*: hold individual conferences with students where their assessment of their own progress can be given; share journals or other materials documenting progress. Student portfolios can demonstrate to both the student and clsssmates the progress made throughout the program.

**Issues to Be Considered**

* Many students will balk at testing and may be afraid that even if initial testing for intake and assessment purposes did not keep them out of the program, evaluation testing might terminate their participation. Testing is a reality. Many jobs require some kind of initial testing for entrance.

* Working on test anxiety can be an important part of the learning process so that students become more comfortable with taking tests and understand the rules and environment of testing.

* Some programs shun all standardized tests which center on academic knowledge in favor of practical, hands-on type tests. Again, both types of test will confront the student at different points and having "safe" experiences with both kinds through your program will be most helpful.

## *Rewards*

The woman who writes her first sentence or thinks through a math problem may be accomplishing something as relatively large as the women with higher skills who composes poetry or attains her GED. Most women in your program will have had few rewards during their lives. Recognizing and rewarding incremental progress through the program is positive reinforcement. Rewards can be formal and informal, big and small.

### Standards

1. The program should reward progress.
2. The program should reward in ways that are noncompetitive and nonhierarchical.

### Implementation Strategies

• Your program may be structured so that women advance from one level to another. Marking the transition can be an important reward.

• Extra activities which can be offered to participants as they pass certain milestones in the program include access to driving lessons, internships and mentoring experiences.

• Praising women in class settings and individually can be an informal way to reward progress; having works read to the class or otherwise exhibited is another way.

• Rewarding attendance, given the problems all programs face with attrition, can be important.

• If students create their own newsletter for the program, having it produced can be a terrific reward. The newsletter can then be used as a recruitment tool for the program, as well as be part of a report to funders.

• Graduation ceremonies are perfect rewards. Have the women plan their own ceremony with staff support; be sure to have included money in the budget for this activity.

• At the end of a program the issuance of certificates or diplomas is important. If someone has attained a GED, entrance to further schooling or training or employment, that needs to be recognized and during a graduation ceremony is a good time.

• Establishing alumni activities such as reunion get-togethers can be both a reward for graduates and can help the program with future recruitment. Facilitating ongoing support groups for graduates can also aid in their retention on the job or in school.

### Issues to Be Considered

* Linking real benefits and praise to student achievements has to be a concerted program emphasis. As has been mentioned, even small achievements need to be recognized and rewarded.

* How do you make rewards meaningful to students? Rewards should be tangible and geared to an adult population. Gold stars on papers will not have the same impact as they do with younger students.

* Staff need to be careful to walk the line between fostering healthy challenge between participants and creating destructive competition. Working in groups so that the value of teamwork is fostered is a way to get around the competition issue. Staff also need to be aware of favoritism and treat participants equally.

## Sample Standardized Texts

*Building Basic Skills in Reading*. Contemporary Books, Chicago, IL. 1986

*Reading Skills*. Harvey S. Weiner and Charles Bazerman, third edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, MA. 1985

*Sentence Skills: A Workbook for Writers*. John Langan, third edition. McGraw-Hill, New York, NY. 1987

*Strategies for Success in Reading*. Steck/Vaughn Publishers, Austin, TX. 1986

*Cambridge Exercise Book in Math Skills*. Cambridge, NY. 1983

*Cambridge Exercise Book in the Mathematics Test*. Cambridge, NY. 1982

*Cambridge Program for the Mathematics Test*. Cambridge, NY. 1981

*Contemporary's Number Power #2, Fractions, Decimals and Percents*. Chicago, IL. 1982

*Essential Mathematics: A Worktext*. D. Franklin Wright. D.C. Heath and Company, Lexington, MA and Toronto. 1985

*Review Text in Preliminary Mathematics*. AMSCO, NY. 1962

*Working with Numbers*. Steck/Vaughn Publishers, Austin, TX. 1986.

## *Sample Program Schedule*

This **sample** schedule represents a closed entry/exit program meeting five days a week from 9:00am to 4:00pm.

| Time | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9:00 | Life Skills | Remediation | Communication | Mathematics | Life Skills |
| 10:00 | Life Skills | Career Dev. | Communica-tions | Career Dev. | Life Skills |
| 11:00 | Mathematics | Career Dev. | Mathematics | Career Dev. | Computer Lab |
| 12:00 | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch |
| 1:00 | Remediation | Mathematics | Occup. Skills | Computer Lab | Communica-tions |
| 2:00 | Occup. Skills | Occup. Skills | Occup. Skills | Occup. Skills | Communica-tions |
| 3:00 | Occup. Skills | Occup. Skills | Time for Appts. | Occup. Skills | Time for Appts. |

## Sample Curriculum

This **sample** curriculum outlines a 20-week program that combines basic education, computer familiarity and critical thinking skills with occupational skills training in building maintenance and repair.

Remediation activities are conducted on an individual and small group basis as needed, in addition to the regular Communications and Mathematics curriculum.

### *Week 1*

*Occupational Skills*: Orientation; Safety Rules/Clothing; Introduction to Electricity, Magnetism, Conductors/Nonconductors

*Communications*: Orientation; Communication Theory; Introduction to Computers

*Mathematics*: Orientation; Review of Addition/Subtraction of Whole Numbers; Problem Solving with Whole Numbers

*Career Development*: Orientation; Job Objectives; Employed Lifestyle; Career vs Job; Steps toward Employment

*Life Skills*: Orientation; Life Skills Planning

### *Week 2*

*Occupational Skills*: Electric Current/Resistance/Color Code; Tool Recognition

*Communications*: Listening

*Mathematics*: Review of Multiplication/Division of Whole Numbers; Problem Solving with Whole Numbers

*Career Development*: Defining Nontraditional Jobs; Assigned Sex Roles; Job Market; Apprenticeship; Career Library

*Life Skills*: Assertiveness Training

### *Week 3*

*Occupational Skills*: Tool Recognition; Circuits—AC/DC, Open/Closed, Series/Parallel

*Communications*: Listening; Note-Taking

*Mathematics*: Reading/Writing, Reducing, Adding Fractions

*Career Development*: Role Models; Apprenticeship Speaker

*Life Skills*: Decision Making

### *Week 4*

*Occupational Skills*: Circuits; Component Identification; Soldering/Desoldering

*Communications*: Following Direction

*Mathematics*: Subtraction/Multiplication/Division Fractions; Problem Solving with Fractions

*Career Development*: Field Trips

*Life Skills*: Goal Setting

### *Week 5*

*Occupational Skills*: Soldering/Desoldering; Wire Wrap

*Communications*: Main Idea—stated

*Mathematics*: Problem Solving with Fractions

*Career Development*: Analyzing Accomplishments/Work History; Self-Assessment

*Life Skills*: Values

### *Week 6*

*Occupational Skills*: Measurement—Rulers/Tape; Use of Hand and Power Tools

*Communications*: Main Idea—inferred

*Mathematics*: Reading/Writing, Comparing, Adding/Subtracting Decimals

*Career Development*: Goal Setting; Job Goals; Job Target Plan

*Life Skills*: Coping with Family and Work Demands

### *Week 7*

*Occupational Skills*: Wall Construction—Studs/Wiring

*Communications*: Paragraph Writing; Joining Sentences

*Mathematics*: Multiplying/Dividing Decimals

*Career Development*: Employer Expectations; Job Myths/Realities; Body Language/Appearance

*Life Skills*: Parenting and Child Care

***Week 8***

*Occupational Skills*: Introduction to Heat Theory

*Communications*: Recordkeeping/Inventory Skills

*Mathematics*: Measurement—Area/Perimeter/Volume; Blueprint Reading

*Career Development*: Mock Interviews on Videotape/Feedback; Answering Tough/Illegal Interview Questions

*Life Skills*: Dealing with Stress

***Week 9***

*Occupational Skills*: Wall Construction—Wiring/Drywall; Introduction to Light/Sound Theory

*Communications*: Dictionary; Context Clues

*Mathematics*: Percents; Problem Solving with Percents

*Career Development*: Informational Interviewing; Salary Negotiations; Practice

*Life Skills*: Time Management

***Week 10***

*Occupational Skills*: Wall Construction—Finish Work; Introduction to Wheels/Levers/Gears

*Communications*: Context Clues; Etymology

*Mathematics*: Review of Basic Arithmetic; Problem Solving

*Career Development*: Resumes; Applications

*Life Skills*: Financial Management

***Week 11***

*Occupational Skills*: Measurement—Area/Perimeter/Volume

*Communications*: Special Terms—vocabulary

*Mathematics*: Positive/Negative Numbers; Variables; Solving Equations

*Career Development*: References; Cover Letters; Thank You Notes

*Life Skills*: Health Maintenance

***Week 12***

*Occupational Skills*: Painting; Replacing Existing Electrical Fixtures

*Communications*: Analogies; Term Diagrams

*Mathematics*: Solving Equations; Square Roots

*Career Development*: Effective Ways to Conduct a Job Search

*Life Skills*: Nontraditional Employment

***Week 13***

*Occupational Skills*: Repair of Woodwork/Plaster/Wallboard; General Maintenance/Trouble Shooting

*Communications*: Reasoning with Symbols; Spatial Relations

*Mathematics*: Geometric Shapes/Formulas

*Career Development*: Networking

*Life Skills*: AIDS and the Workplace

***Week 14***

*Occupational Skills*: Project; Mechanical Aptitude Testing

*Communications*: Test-Taking Skills

*Mathematics*: Problem Solving

*Career Development*: How to Use the Telephone to Get Job Interviews; Role-Plays

*Life Skills*: Sexual Harassment on the Job

***Week 15***

*Occupational Skills*: Blueprint Reading

*Communications*: Mind-Twisters

*Mathematics*: Powers; Metric; English System of Measurement; Use of Calculator; Ohm's Law; Banking Math

*Career Development*: Employer Panel; Information on Other Training Programs

*Life Skills*: Job Maintenance—Making a Good Impression and Having It Last

***Weeks 16–18***

*Internships*

***Weeks 19–20***

*Job Search*

In earlier chapters we discussed *assessment* as an initial determination of a woman's skill levels and *evaluation* as the ongoing process of tracking a woman's progress in the program. This chapter will deal with *impact* as a way of documenting the success, not only of the individual woman, but of the program as a whole.

## Standards

1. The program should maintain measurements of program success, based on meeting the standards for each component.
2. The program should use a variety of methods to measure impact.

## Implementation Strategies

Some of the standardized measurements of both assessment and evaluation do not always accurately reflect the literacy level of an individual woman. Bias in testing materials, test anxiety and timing of a test can all influence the final score. Just as informal measurements are encouraged to complement the necessity for standardized tests during assessment and evaluation, so they are encouraged when documenting program success.

Success can be defined as simply as students achieving program goals. For example, you may determine that they need to have accomplished the following:

1. Received a positive written evaluation from instructors, counselors or others.
2. Improved scores on a post-achievement test.
3. Received satisfactory or better rating on any other basic skills tests.
4. Completed employment-related training and received a satisfactory appraisal of employability skills.
5. Placed in a job or further training or education.

### Standardized Methods of Measurement

Many of the standardized or more "traditional" methods of measurement are required by funding sources. Grade-level increases as measured by a post-program achievement test are most commonly looked at when determining the "success" or "failure" of a literacy program. "Average" grade level gains may tend to be modest (under 1.0 to 1.5), with the range of gains for individuals reaching as high as 3.0 in some basic skill areas, depending on the entry skill levels and the length of the program. Other skill acquisition tests may be used in place of or in addition to an achievement test—final scores are always compared to pre-program scores.

But reliance on such tests is limiting when trying to document the full range of changes a woman may have experienced by participating in your program. Try to delay post-testing until very near the end of the program to demonstrate the maximum skill attainment of your participants. But be aware of attrition—sometimes learners who progress the fastest will leave the program to get a job and you will not have had the time to test them, gaining their higher test scores.

Other outcomes that are accepted as signs of success are program completion rates and final placements for the women upon program termination. If your funding is tied to JTPA, you may be under performance standards that only recognize placement in employment as a "successful" termination. However, some funding sources will also accept a woman going on to further education, job training or completion of a GED as success.

In some instances, an outside evaluator may be contracted to assess the success of your program. You may want to arrange this on your own initiative, or it may be a requirement from a funder that you participate in such a study.

### Nonstandardized Methods of Measurement

Increases in grade levels are not the only signs of program success. Finding ways to

document, in an acceptable way, other outcomes is important. When a woman emerges from your program with enhanced feelings of self-worth, a set of goals, a change in attitude and/or increased personal esteem, a sense of life direction, better coping mechanisms and more involvement with her own life decisions—that too is success.

Some of the methods suggested in the section on evaluation can also be used to measure program impact. Staff discussion and observation of program participants during case management meetings should be written up as case notes.

The staff may have designed some of its own measurement tools. These should be administered to the program participants. Focus groups conducted with the women to discuss changes can bring out valuable feedback on how the program met their needs. Questionnaires can also be used. (See the sample at the close of this chapter.)

Just as entrance interviews were conducted, so should exit interviews be held. This is a time to hear what difference the woman feels her participation in the program has made. Pre- and post-program photographs of participants can be dramatic evidence of increased self-esteem and personal worth, but be sure that you have the student's permission to take and use them. Class assignments can also be used to measure progress. If the women are assigned to write a self-profile when entering the program and then just before leaving, the difference can be taken as a measure.

Surveying other service providers in the community, employers of your graduates, funders and other agencies can be useful in determing how your program is perceived. You can use that information to strengthen referral and funding contacts.

## *Issues to Be Considered*

* There is a need for more research to be done by the academic community in concert with program delivery professionals. Developing new strategies to document program impacts is imperative given the complexities of increasing literacy for low-income single mothers and the demands of funders for concrete measures of success. Program operators have a lot of experience to offer to such a university or research community partnership.

* As a corollary to the above, a way must be found to quantify results that are not easily described in statistical terms. How do you measure increased self-esteem? How do you measure stronger mother-child bonding or an increase in a child's interest in learning? How do you measure realistic goal-setting? Defining the terms we use and devising ways to measure progress are necessary in order to build credibility for our methods and to serve women better.

* Reconciling funder requirements for acceptable outcomes with what is realistic and meaningful for the women is a major issue. It has been raised throughout this program model in various contexts because the limitations placed on programs by funders can be detrimental to the very women who are to be served. Emphasis on cost-effectiveness (defined as an arbitrary cost-per-participant figure) and employment placement do not speak to the complicated and expensive array of support services, longer program time and realistic outcomes that program operators know are involved. Continued advocacy with different funders is imperative. Funder communities must be pursuaded to take the responsibility of providing monies that can be targeted toward the hardest to serve, without binding program operators to restrictive performance standards designed for individuals with fewer skill needs and barriers to employment.

## *Sample Questionnaire for Program Participants*

1. When did you attend the program?_____

2. How did you learn about this program?

   Newspaper___ Radio___ Television___

   Friend___ Staff Member___ Bus Ad___

   Flyer___ Other_____

3. How was your initial contact made with the program?

   Telephone___ Drop-in___ Orientation___

   Other_____

4. Do you think that the program was helpful to you?

   Yes___ No___

   Why?_____

   _____

5. If you answered Yes, what part of the program was *most* helpful?

   Basic education skills training___

   Occupational skills training___

   Counseling___

   Job Planning and Readiness___

   Support Services___

   Other_____

6. As a result of being in this program will you:

   Have a job___ Enter another training program___

   Have your GED___ Enter school___

   Other_____

7. Before you entered this program, did you think you needed to improve your reading, writing and math skills?

   Yes___ No___ Did not know___

8. Do you think this program has helped to improve your reading, writing and math skills?

   Yes___ No___ Don't know___

9. While you were in the program, did you have trouble with any of the following:

___ Not finding accessible, affordable, safe child care

___ Social services agencies did not cooperate

___ Family members did not support being in the program

___ Health problems

___ Housing problems

___ Children had health or school problems

___ Got discouraged

___ Not interested in the kind of jobs offered

___ Other_____

_____

10. Do you feel that the program helped you with any of the problems you checked in the question above?

Yes___ No___

How?_____

_____

11. What did you like most about the program?_____

_____

12. What did you like least about the program?_____

_____

13. What three things would you change about the program?

_____

_____

_____

14. What was the most important thing that made you come to this program?

_____

_____

15. Would you recommend this program to others?

Yes___ No___ Not sure___

# VIII. PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY

One of the toughest measures of the effectiveness of federal, state and local literacy policies is whether they meet the needs of the most challenging groups of adult learners, such as low-income single mothers. There have been a number of advocacy issues raised in this manual:

* The need for better information regarding the literacy of women in specific communities.

* The lack of understanding on the part of some agencies and/or funders concerning the linkage between literacy and employment training.

* The lack of funding targeted specifically to serving low-income women that accommodates their special needs, such as the need for support services.

* The practice of some states to channel all or most of their literacy funding through the local education system, thus inhibiting access by community-based organizations.

* The either/or choice set up by some communities with limited resources between "service-rich" literacy programs for the few or less comprehensive services for the many.

* The lack in some communities of promotion of linkages between literacy programs and other community resources.

* The insistance by some funders on grade-level increases and/or placement in employment as definitions of success, regardless of student entry skill levels or the length of the program; and the insistance by some funders to define literacy services in terms of actual classroom contact hours instead of comprehensive service delivery.

* The need for better research, assessment, evaluation and impact measurement tools.

Many of these advocacy issues relate back to the barriers discussed earlier. Those barriers are not just the personal problems of women—they are issues of public policy. As program operators, it is important that our voices be heard. We must be advocates for our own programs, and work in advocacy partnership with the women who are our program participants.

The question is sometimes raised, "Shouldn't the education of adults be the responsibility of the education system—shouldn't policy makers concentrate on education reform so that we improve the literacy of all students and *prevent* illiteracy?" Currently, millions of adults and young people whose basic skills will not meet the requirements of the workplace are coming to employment and training programs for services. Often these individuals have substantial barriers to re-entry into the education system. Referring such persons back to that system does not necessarily address the realities of the population in need.

Without receiving literacy and employment training, functionally illiterate adults, especially women, have limited opportunity to secure jobs that will support themselves and their families. We know that the low literacy skill levels of parents, especially of mothers, will have an impact on the literacy attainments of their children. More intensive and comprehensive services must be designed for and delivered to those who need them. The findings of the case study sites showed that such services are feasible to provide and can be successful. These services do require more funding and expansion of the goals of the public systems which operate both literacy and employment training programs. Public policies will need to be shaped accordingly.

## Policy Recommendations

The following policy initiatives and directions are recommended to increase women's and girls' access to literacy programs:

1. Increased federal funds to support literacy and basic skills initiatives in established federal programs such as the Adult Education Act, the Job Training Partnership Act, the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act and others.

2. Special efforts to ensure that women are targeted and served equitably in pub-

licly funded programs. Vehicles for achieving increased equity for women include set-asides of funds for services to women or special groups of women, inclusion of women as special target populations for services, and requirements that state plans indicate how the state intends to ensure that women are recruited and served.

3. Improved coordination among public systems of literacy service provision (e.g. job training, vocational education, adult education, public schools, social service agencies).

4. Expanded joint remediation programs for parents and children. The Even Start Act, which provides funds for such programs, is a step in that direction; opportunities for similar efforts exist in other public programs (e.g. JTPA summer youth program).

5. Authorized federal funds for the provision of support services to women in literacy programs. States should also be encouraged to allocate funds for support services.

6. Increased flexibility in eligibility criteria for service deliverers of publicly funded programs. Community-based organizations should be included among the groups eligible to provide literacy services. Partnerships between education, community-based organizations, business and unions should be encouraged.

7. Provision of opportunities for welfare recipients of all ages to receive educational services, from literacy enhancement to high school equivalency certificates to higher education, in addition to other employment and training activities.

8. Increased funding for research and demonstration projects to gather and disseminate information on literacy instruction methods and effective model programs. More data should be required to be collected on existing public programs.

### What You Can Do

It is critical to see the links between service delivery and public policy and to understand the role your program can play in both arenas. Many of the advocacy activities and strategies used around employment and training issues can be adapted to literacy issues. In fact, an excellent start is to make sure that literacy issues are on the agenda of your own local or state coalitions which normally address employment and training issues. Literacy should be considered a vital component of any employment and training, vocational education or welfare reform initiative.

Working in coalitions, testifying on state plans, advocating at the state legislature and providing a forum for program participants to speak to legislators are some things that can be done. Joining in national efforts through WOW's Women's Work Force Network can be important. Your membership fees, response to public policy action alerts and ability to inform national organizations of what is happening on the local and state levels are critical. (See WWF membership application at back of manual.)

Providing services in isolation of public policy work is not effective. Even the smallest acts of advocacy will help to serve the women of your programs better.

# IX. CONCLUSIONS

Literacy instruction has to be a vital component of employment training programs to guarantee long-term, poverty-relieving employment for single women with children. Women with low basic skill levels and a lack of self-confidence are too often kept from the competitive job market. Many need to upgrade their performance in reading, writing and mathematics; increase their life skills and critical thinking abilities; as well as acquire some familiarity with computers and other technology.

The numerous barriers that prevent women from achieving employment and adequate literacy levels stem from a variety of sources. Basic education skills classes, which draw out and build on what they already know and encourage them to apply their survival skills, enable them to meet their varying goals. The supportive services that would alleviate some of the barriers are as important as the curriculum itself, but are too often ignored by government agencies and other funders.

Since the barriers are multi-tiered and varied, they must be surmounted with a variety of coordinated strategies. Advocates, government, service providers and funders must be willing to get together to discuss their approaches. Training programs must expand to meet the diverse needs of the targeted population and service providers on local and state levels must coordinate their efforts. Real gains in literacy are not possible, however, without the cooperation of funding agencies and government.

In a nonstressful atmosphere, the women become active participants in their own learning and begin to recognize their own power. They grow in their capacities for self-discipline and personal and group responsibility.

As the research case study sites have demonstrated, combining literacy and employment training has enabled many program participants to obtain and upgrade jobs or to continue their education. Just as important, many women have developed the confidence and ability to defend their rights, to understand workplace procedures, to deal effectively with workplace problems and to become stronger parents.

# X. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


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and learning needs of "mid-level literates," that is, persons with reading skills in the range from fifth to ninth grades.

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# PUBLICATIONS

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## PUBLIC POLICY RESOURCES

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Women, Work and Age: A Report on Older Women and Employment (1987) ..... 10.00 _____

Who Cares for Kids? A Report on Child Care Providers (1985) ..... 10.00 _____

Caution: Your Work May Be Hazardous to Your Health A Survey of Women's Occupational Health Hazards (1984) ..... 10.00 _____

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Training Manual ..... 15.00 _____

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Publications of the National Coalition on Women, Work and Welfare Reform:

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(Strategies for assessing state and local welfare employment initiatives)

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(A welfare reform proposal)

### Literacy

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Wider Opportunities: Combining Literacy and Employment Training for Women (1988)

Executive Summary: Outlines barriers to and strategies for enhancing literacy skills of female single parents as identified by five case study sites. ..... 7.50 _____

Case Studies: In depth reports of sites participating in national literacy project.

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(An introduction to the wage gap and suggested solutions to the problem)

Employers, Unions and Women's Advocates Talk about Pay Equity—A Conference Summary (1984) ..... 5.00 _____

## PROGRAM RESOURCES

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